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Inside APHIS

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Fast-Spreading Disease Hopscotches Across New Mexico

By Kendra Pratt, Public Affairs, LPA

On May 27, a horse in Las Cruces, NM, was diagnosed with vesicular stomatitis, a contagious disease of livestock last seen in the United States in 1985. After receiving a request for diagnostic assistance from the New Mexico State Veterinarian, VS employees immediately set up a livestock disease investigation unit (LDIU) at the Hampton Inn in Las Cruces. The unit became operational in less than a week after the first case was confirmed.

"This first case didn't really surprise me because of New Mexico's history of having vesicular stomatitis every 8 to 10 years," said Jere Dick, area veterinarian in charge of New Mexico for VS. "I knew from how the virus is thought to cycle that we were about due for it. I was concerned we would have a long summer ahead of us."

An immediate response was necessary to combat this disease known for its sporadic and quick spread. While vesicular stomatitis is not considered either a foreign animal disease or a fatal disease, it is a disease of concern to APHIS because its outward signs are similar to foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), which was eradicated from U.S. livestock in 1929. Only laboratory tests can tell these two diseases apart.

Cattle, horses, swine, sheep, and camelids can contract vesicular stomatitis. In affected livestock, the disease causes blisterlike lesions in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, hooves, and teats. These blisters swell and break, leaving raw tissue that is so painful that infected animals generally refuse to eat. Many also

(See NEW MEXICO on page 4)



APHIS PHOTO BY DENNIS TRAINUM

VS' Linda Carpenter, Washington Area Office FADD, displays vesicular stomatitis tongue lesions. Carpenter was one of several employees on detail to the unit in Las Cruces, NM, to investigate the contagious livestock disease.

In This Issue

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|
| Wallingford, CT, assembles a star "one APHIS" team. | 3 | Hoboken Station, treasure-trove of history, to close. | 10 |
| Employee describes life on an emergency task force. | 4 | ADC recruits minority student from Lincoln U. | 13 |
| FMD scientist becomes part of PAHO | 6 | Huge orchid shipment catches eye of indentifiers. | 14 |
| FSO gets its Hammer Award. | 7 | REAC employee finds a new home for capuchin monkey. | 15 |
| Riverdale, MD, employees enjoy on-site child care. | 8 | | |

Terry Medley Is New Associate Administrator of the Agency

On August 31, the Department announced the appointment of Terry Medley as the new associate administrator of APHIS.

"Medley is a brilliant individual who is a leader and pioneer in the field of biotechnology biosafety regulation," said Lonnie J. King, APHIS administrator. "His knowledge of the law coupled with his expertise in agricultural issues is a great asset to this agency. His background and expertise are strengths that provide an excellent match and partnership with me and will enhance our team in the administrator's office."

Since the appointment of King as Administrator in July, the agency has moved to fill positions long held by employees in acting roles. Medley's appointment is part of this effort to fill vacant positions.

Medley has been the acting associate administrator of APHIS since February 1993, except for the 6-month period in 1994 when he served as the acting administrator for USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. Before serving in that



capacity, Medley was director of the biotechnology, biologics, and environmental protection program of APHIS.

He began his federal career as an attorney for the regulatory division of USDA's Office of the

General Counsel, providing legal services to APHIS and FSIS. In 1982, he was promoted to senior attorney and advisor for PPQ. As part of the coordinated Federal effort to regulate biotechnology, he assisted in the drafting of the coordinated framework for regulation of biotechnology. As the former director of the biotechnology and environmental coordination staff, he was an author of the USDA regulations for certain genetically engineered organisms.

A native of Union, S.C., Medley graduated cum laude from Amherst College in 1974. He earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1977.

He is a frequent speaker and participant at biotechnology and environmental conferences in the United States and abroad and has received several USDA awards for leadership and superior service. He and his wife Gerre and their two children live in Arlington, VA. ♦

The Consensus is "Keep It" Say Surveyed About Newsletter

During the 1994 Reinvention Conference, employees voiced their desire to make some changes to *Inside APHIS*. They wanted it to report reinvention efforts, more field events, and have more field reporters contribute. To ensure that this group was representative of all employees and to find out if the publication was still meeting their needs, LPA asked PPD to conduct an agencywide survey this past spring.

The survey was sent to 1,000 of APHIS' 6,500 employees. Employees were chosen at random. PPD received a 46-percent return rate—450 surveys were returned; 362 of these were from employees who work in field locations; 88 were from the Riverdale, MD./Washington, DC, areas.

Here are the results: "Do you read *Inside APHIS*?" Field—90.5 percent; headquarters—92.5 percent. "How well does *Inside* keep you informed of agency policies and operations?" Field—74 percent satisfied; headquarters—79.9

percent satisfied. "How well does *Inside* remain neutral conveying both management and employee attitudes?" Field—75.1 percent satisfied; headquarters—slightly more satisfied. "How well does *Inside* serve as a channel of communication within the agency?" Field—71.3 percent satisfied; headquarters—slightly more satisfied. "Should LPA continue to publish and distribute the newsletter?" Field—83 percent in favor; headquarters—88 percent in favor.

Comments from 114 employees also provided insight; 30 employees wanted more articles about field programs. The second most common comment (28 responses) was that the money spent on the newsletter could better be spent on programs.

To comply with the request for more field input, LPA will search for "stringers" in the field who would like to write for the newsletter. In addition, we are asking that the deputies of each unit identify a liaison who would work with LPA,

either writing program stories or funneling story ideas to us.

To get more input on reinvention issues, the *Inside* editor is working closely with the editors of the
(See SURVEY on page 5)

Inside APHIS

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"One APHIS" Team Clears Special Athletes in Connecticut

By Patty Douglass, State Plant Health Director, Connecticut

This past July, almost a million people visited New Haven, CT, for the ninth Special Olympics World Summer Games for athletes with mental retardation. The world's largest sports event in 1995 and the largest sports event ever held in Connecticut, the games had 6,500 athletes from over 120 countries participating.

Almost all foreign country teams entered the United States via New York and New Jersey international airports and reached New Haven by bus. However, I found out late on June 21 that two flights were likely to be cleared during the following week at Bradley International Airport here in Connecticut. The first flight was an American Trans Air charter from Moscow, Russia, carrying 310 people. Special Olympians, coaches, and family members comprised teams from Armenia, Belarus, Eurasia, Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan, Republic of Georgia, Russia, and Turkmenistan. A second flight of 112 carried the Czech Republic and Slovak teams.

Because both the staff and facility at Bradley are small, special arrangements were necessary to clear the flights. Also, PPQ profiling data indicate that travelers from Eastern Europe are high risk for bringing in prohibited fruits, vegetables and animal products. After exploring various alternatives, I opted to do 100 percent handbag inspections. For this kind of inspection, I needed additional help. I decided to seek assistance from other APHIS employees stationed in the area.

The inspection team pulled together to clear the two flights included me, PPQ officers Bob Fitch and Al Bennett from the Connecticut work unit; PPQ officer Seymour Maisey from Amherst, MA; VS veterinary medical officer Lech Szkudlarek of Connecticut; REAC Inspector Jan Puzas of Connecticut; REAC investigator for southern New England, Jim Finn; and PPQ regional program manager Terry Goodman, who is stationed in Wallingford, CT. I arranged for three interpreters via the Special

Olympics greeter committee to assist us with the clearance.

The APHIS-wide team made 46 plant quarantine material interceptions (QMI's) and 23 animal QMI's totalling 12 kgs. from the two flights. With the additional assistance, passengers were cleared efficiently. Szkudlarek was especially helpful for his knowledge of animal products and disease status of the eastern European nations and for his translation skills.

I am extremely grateful that these five employees were willing to

assist my small staff on such short notice. Not only did they do an excellent job as instant "PPQ officers," but they willingly accepted phone calls from me in the middle of the night when the estimated time of arrival was changed from 0600 to 0500 hours. Although we have different job functions, we have a common mission. This experience has demonstrated to me that I can count on the assistance of the APHIS personnel stationed in Connecticut in an emergency. We truly are one APHIS! ♦



The APHIS team at Bradley International Airport (from left): Jim Finn, REAC; Jan Puzas, REAC; Terry Goodman, PPQ; Lech Szkudlarek, VS; Alfred Bennett, PPQ; Seymour Maisey, PPQ. Not pictured: Robert Fitch and Patty Douglass, both PPQ.

Up and Running: Life on an Emergency Task Force

By Kendra Pratt, Public Affairs, LPA

Living out of a suitcase for 3 or 4 weeks is one thing. But working everyday in a hotel room is something else altogether—especially when this hotel “office” is shared with several harried taskforce colleagues, five computers, a temperamental copier, and five phones ringing off the hook. Add frequent drop-in visits from local news crews and journalists, local county extension agents, curiosity seekers, and the overnight mail carrier, and you get working conditions that are not conducive to accomplishing any task, including staying calm.

But APHIS employees working for the vesicular stomatitis taskforce this summer succeeded in not only working in these conditions but also in providing topnotch information and diagnostic services to the States currently affected by the disease.

It was not an easy beginning, however. All necessary equipment and supplies had to be procured and operational within one week-end at the Hampton Inn in Las Cruces, New Mexico. On the first Monday that the Livestock Disease Investigation Unit (LDIU) was up and running, a media broadcast wrongly asserted that the entire State of New Mexico was under Federal quarantine. This report generated a flood of panic and phone calls to LDIU.

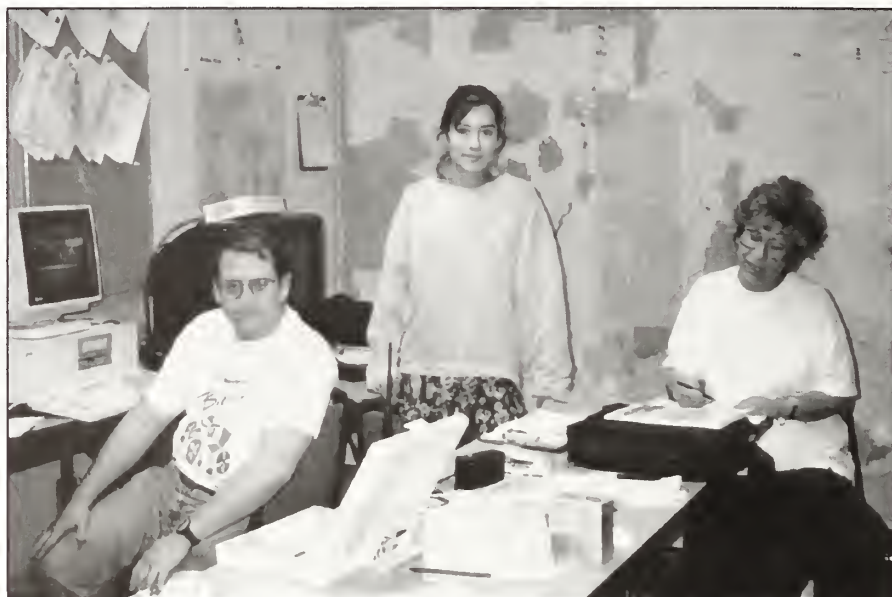
“It seemed as though someone had opened a door and a large wall of water—endless water—came rushing in,” recalls Cheryl Waldschmidt, an administrative officer from Idaho detailed to Las Cruces in June.

Thankfully, its second week of operation afforded the LDIU time and energy to get computer and mapping systems on-line to assist the New Mexico Livestock Board with the outbreak.

While the phones rang at the office in Las Cruces, the foreign animal disease diagnosticians responded to many sick calls each day in New Mexico, driving for hours throughout the State. Not only did they have a lot of territory to cover, but they also had to keep blood and tissue samples cold in the desert heat and change coveralls and wash their cars between premises visits. They also had to

coordinate the quarantines being set by the New Mexico Livestock Inspectors.

But not only APHIS employees worked hard for animal health. Chuck Palmer, veterinarian-in-charge of the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Redding District, volunteered to assist APHIS for the month of June, working long hours every day of the week. Because he is a California State employee, he could not receive any overtime compensation for his diligence. But New Mexico and APHIS employees will never forget his contribution. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY CHERYL WALDSCHMIDT

Tracking the outbreak from their office at the Hampton Inn are epidemiologist John Belfrage (Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health), student Erika Parada (New Mexico State University), and Sally Nikula (VS Area Office, California).

NEW MEXICO from page 1

show signs of lameness. Substantial weight loss usually follows. Dairy cows develop mastitis (infection of the udder), and many go dry.

The vesicular stomatitis virus is believed to be spread by insect vectors and by animal-to-animal contact, as well as by contact with contaminated equipment.

While VS foreign animal disease diagnosticians (FADD's) worked

with State livestock inspectors to diagnose the disease and impose quarantines on farms and ranches, the virus continued to move through the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Not only did the disease spread geographically, but it also jumped from equines to other susceptible species, including cattle and even one llama.

One month after the LDIU was activated, New Mexico had over

100 premises positive for the virus, and cases had turned up in the southwest corner of Colorado. Single cases had been found on farms in Texas and Arizona by the end of July.

VS anticipated this quick spread, moving the disease-coordinating functions of the LDIU to its Western Regional Office in Englewood, CO. These functions include listing and tracking the

location and laboratory results of cases and mapping positive premises and quarantines throughout the United States.

"This type of event proves the preparedness of the program," said Stuart McDonald, Western Region public affairs specialist who was in New Mexico coordinating media interest in the outbreak.

At the Area office in Albuquerque, NM, it's been "a juggling act," reports Dick, to add the outbreak activities to his normal program duties. Dick attributes his ability to keep up with his workload to the dedication of APHIS and State employees who have dedicated their time to the outbreak. The support of the New Mexico Livestock Board has been key to helping enforce quarantines, Dick says.

Former Outbreaks

Says Bob Nervig, Western Regional Director for VS, "If you compare the location and spread of this year's outbreak with vesicular stomatitis outbreaks in the 1980's during the same time of the year, you can see that our cooperative effort to contain this disease has slowed the spread significantly."

In 1983 and 1985, vesicular stomatitis spread through 17 Western States, causing economic losses to the livestock industry. VS Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) have mapped these previous outbreaks

to use as a model for tracking the current disease situation.

"Our current technology has probably been the factor that has given us advantages against the disease that we lacked in the 1980's," Nervig says. He cites the epidemiology tracking and mapping software programs and the use of cellular telephones by the FADD's as examples.

Besides providing diagnostic and epidemiological support to affected States, Nervig says that sharing information is a critical strategy. "By providing a steady supply of factual information about the outbreak," says Nervig, "we reduce the potential for rumors and misinformation."

CEAH, VS Emergency Programs, and LPA have created several factsheets about the disease and a weekly report that they distribute to animal health officials and industry representatives throughout the country.

"Working on the vesicular stomatitis outbreak has been hectic, challenging, and fun," says Vicki Bridges, who prepares the Weekly Update at CEAH. "As soon as I finish one week's update, I have to start on the next one."

Balancing Needs

The most difficult aspect of this outbreak, according to Nervig, has been trying to balance the local needs and interests with national

and international demands. Locally, the outbreak has closed livestock auctions and saleyards and has cancelled horse events and rodeos. Restrictions on interstate movement of livestock have impacted many people in the Southwest. But because the international community considers vesicular stomatitis a disease of concern to their own domestic industries, many countries have placed restrictions on the exportation of U.S. animals and animal products. To resolve these competing demands, VS is developing options for putting in place regional quarantines to both minimize local losses and to assure international trading partners of the health of our exports.

The outbreak has also provided opportunities to learn more about vesicular stomatitis through research. Scientists from the Southeastern Wildlife Disease Cooperative and from the Agricultural Research Service are looking into the roles that certain insects, such as sand and black flies, have in spreading the virus. Other research will evaluate the incubation period for the disease after animals are exposed to the virus.

"Cooperation has been our key asset," Nervig says. "Our efforts have validity based on cooperation of the States, universities, industries, other Federal agencies, and the goodwill of the public." ♦

SURVEY from page 2

Forum, an ad hoc newsletter published daily during agencywide strategy events and periodically to employees interested in reinvention. The *Forum*'s editors in Minneapolis, MN, are sharing their news and have agreed to pass feature articles to *Inside*. *Inside* will cover conference wrap-ups, and *Forum* will cover daily progress.

An electronic edition is a distinct possibility in the next year or so

after the contract for the Integrated Systems Acquisition Project is awarded and after ITS implements compatible hardware and software systems agencywide. For those employees who commented that the money would be better spent on field programs, we think they ought to know the costs. For the past several years, we have been producing 6 to 7 issues a year; each issue has between 8 and 20 pages, and the cost has been under \$9,000 per year.

We thank those employees who responded to this poll and welcome contributions or comments at any time. Until you tell us differently,

we will continue to promote the goals of *Inside APHIS*—to keep employees fully informed of all facets of agency operations and policies, to maintain a neutral stance, conveying both management and employee views, and to serve as a channel for communication within the agency. ♦

Signing of PAHO Agreement Puts Epidemiologist in Brazil

By Linda Small, Operational Support, IS

In June 1995, Administrator Lonnie King and Director George Alleyne of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) met in Washington, DC, to sign a cooperative agreement that will strengthen the collaboration of the two organizations in an area of mutual interest—surveillance and control of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

This agreement allows IS to assign a leading FMD scientist, Juan Lubroth, to PAHO's Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (Panaftosa) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The collaboration of Lubroth with other PAHO scientists will include studies in immunology and the differential diagnosis of FMD-infected animals from FMD-vaccinated animals.

Lubroth's international experience includes extensive research in foreign animal diseases. During a tour in Mexico (1987 to 1990) Lubroth conducted research and developed diagnostic laboratory procedures with the U.S.-Mexico Exotic Animal Disease Commission, becoming acting co-director for the Commission for a time. His broad knowledge in both field and laboratory research enhanced IS efforts in Mexico. While working for the Commission, Lubroth began developing the foreign animal diseases (FAD) courses for veterinarians that have been taught all over Central and South America. The courses have been given in Argentina for the past 8 years.

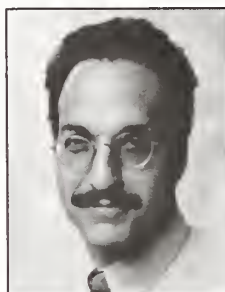
Lubroth recently completed his PhD at Yale University's Department of Epidemiology and Public Health in New Haven, CT, while conducting research at Plum Island, NY, with VS' Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab (FADDL) and the Agricultural Research Service.

In South America since August, Lubroth is working in international laboratories with scientists, veterinarians and PAHO employees and in the field, often in remote rural locations, on various FMD projects. At the time of the writing of this article, Lubroth was in Bogota, Colombia, conducting a FAD course and could not be reached for comment.

Alfonso Torres, head of diagnostic services at FADDL, co-taught the July FAD class in Bogota with

Lubroth and has followed his work in the laboratory during his PhD studies. "Juan is a field person at heart," Torres says. Although he has had a lot of scientific and laboratory training, much of it here at Plum Island, he likes to see how everything fits into field situations. The question he is always asking himself is 'How can we help the situation in the field?' Juan wants to apply his scientific knowledge to solve field problems—specifically, the eradication of FMD from South America."

During the time that Lubroth was working at Plum Island, he worked with a protein of the FMD virus. This newly studied protein fraction appears to be a major part of the FMD virus that elicits an early serological response in infected animals. Lubroth has developed a diagnostic test using this protein that, in laboratory conditions, distinguishes between vaccinated animals and infected



Juan Lubroth

animals. If this test can be validated in controlled trials in the field, it will allow field veterinarians to identify FMD-infected "carrier" animals—high-risk animals that do not show clinical signs of FMD but that carry the virus for long periods of time, thus becoming potential sources of new disease outbreaks.

Lubroth also conducted original research on the technology to use simple animal blood samples for an FMD diagnostic test on the farm or ranch. This test technology would allow animals to be tested on site, before movement for sale or processing and eliminate initial testing at central veterinary diagnostic laboratory facilities. All infected animals would be identified before their movements spread FMD to other animals and premises. Whether as a screening tool or as a definitive single test, this would provide a valuable new tool for FMD control and eradication.

"In his new job, comments Torres, "Juan will aid a Panaftosa initiative to eradicate FMD from the Rio de la Plata basin—a vast and fertile area of South America taking in southern Brazil, Uruguay (FMD-free), Argentina, and Paraguay. Juan will be providing support and



Signing the document are (from left) Lonnie King, APHIS administrator, PAHO staffer, and George Alleyne, PAHO director.

PAHO PHOTO BY ARMANDO WAAK

FSO's Reinvention Lab Gets Its Coveted Hammer Award

By Louise Catt, Field Servicing Office, M&B

M&B's Field Servicing Office (FSO) knew the award would come some day. In 1994, the National Performance Review had awarded a hammer to the two teams comprising FSO's reinvention laboratory. The teams had distinguished themselves for their effort to meet customer needs for purchases and leasing. But the award's presentation was delayed, caught between the outgoing and incoming Secretaries' schedules.

Glickman Presentations

Nevertheless, the ceremony, when it took place on August 1, in Minneapolis, MN, was "fantastic," according to FSO employees. Secretary Dan Glickman presented the award and gave each team member a small hammer pin and certificate.

"Finally! Some recognition for our reinvention efforts," says Rick George of the Realty Team. "Realty has always wanted the opportunity to do things better, cheaper, faster, and in a way that makes sense. The Hammer Award proves that others feel that way, too."

"To receive the Hammer Award was worth every bit of work put into reinvention," says Arlette Johnson of the Purchasing Team. "It was one of the proudest moments of my life."

FSO's Procurement and Realty Reinvention Lab provides administrative services for four USDA agencies. Employees on two teams have been empowered through an intensive training program in total quality management and through development of self-directed teams.

The lab's Purchasing Team saved half a million dollars in the small-purchases area in fiscal year (FY) 1993 and over \$700,000 in FY 1994, primarily by working smarter and taking advantage of available Government discounts and cost-effective vendors. The team now completes 90 percent of all purchase orders within 24 hours of receipt with an error rate of less than 1 percent.

The Realty Team—which manages 803,000 square feet of agency building space, 1 million square feet of General Services Administration (GSA) assigned space, and 468 acres of land—developed consolidated and user-friendly versions of GSA guidelines and questionnaires. For instance, GSA used an 82-page document for standard solicitations. FSO tailors the GSA solicitation document to its customer, resulting in as few as 10 pages. GSA's customer questionnaire is 69 pages; FSO's tailored version has as few as 5 pages. FSO has streamlined the leasing process to an average of 127 days to occupancy in comparison to GSA's average of 18 months.

Satisfied Customers

The great challenge for the teams was to make sure that the new processes would result in satisfied customers. Results were to be measured by customer satisfaction surveys. Their strategy worked. Besides the cost and time savings, the overall customer-satisfaction rating for the Realty Team was 4.5 and for the Purchasing Team 3.8—each out of a possible 5.

The purchasing and realty processes are two of many that FSO has streamlined over the last year or so. FSO employees have accomplished similar achievements for property, accounting, user fees, contracting, payments, claims, and warehouse key functions. Have questions? Want to give customer feedback? Call FSO's Steve Poore at (612) 370-2131. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY BOB ROCK

FSO's Purchasing and Realty Teams get their hammer: (from left) Lorrie Kurtz, Nancy White, Arlette Johnson, Diana Halsey, Mick Turk, Pam Tucker, Jim Griffin, Mary Thornhill, Terry Gmitterko, David Gradick, Bonnie Smith, Darrellyn Gereau, Annette Maros, Rick George, Secretary Dan Glickman, Ann Dreier, Paul Lund, Dennis Barry, Jan Lieder.

coordination to this effort."

"The presence of an APHIS epidemiologist in Panaftosa gives us an opportunity to be an active

partner in regional foreign animal disease control and eradication strategies," says Alex Thiermann, deputy administrator of IS. "With

his field experience and his research background, Juan is the ideal person for this assignment." ♦

Employees at Riverdale Complex Get On-Site Child Care

By Sue Wilkinson, Public Affairs, LPA

Riverdale, MD, employees bearing briefcases and handbags are now being joined on their way into work by little people toting Barney and Lion King bookbags. Thanks to the efforts of the APHIS Work * Family * Life (WFL) Council and a start-up team of hardworking and dedicated employees, the facility in Riverdale now offers onsite child care.

The Sunny Days Early Learning Center opened its doors on June 19. The center currently serves as the home-away-from-home for 30 children. The facility, which is run by Children's World Learning Centers®, has room for a total of 67 children, ages 6 weeks through 5 years.

When the APHIS WFL Council learned about the intended move for the headquarters facility from its former site in Hyattsville to the new facility in Riverdale, the Council decided to look into the possibility of establishing onsite child care in the new building. About 3 years ago, the Day Care Resource Group, a subcommittee of the WFL Council, and representatives from the Agricultural Research Center and Office of Inspector General conducted a survey of headquarters employees with the assistance of the General Services Administration to determine the need for and potential interest in onsite child care.

Board of Directors

The APHIS Management Team committed money to help build the facility, and the WFL Council established an organizing committee to form a nonprofit corporation that would oversee the center's operation. The organizing committee selected a board of directors who became incorporated with the State of Maryland as the Riverdale Federal Child Development Center, Inc., (RFCDCI) on September 6, 1994.

RFCDCI, informally known as the Sunny Days Board of Directors, oversaw the selection process for the vendor. The group received eight bids in response to its request for proposals. They narrowed the field of candidates to three and visited as many sites as possible.



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

From fighting fires to hosting tea parties, Julia Rubin, 3, stays busy. Here she serves tea to her mother, Leslie Rubin of BBEP, in the "housekeeping" area of the Sunny Days Early Learning Center.

"Two of our top criteria were the prices the vendor charged for child care and the salaries offered to the care providers," said Julie Marquis, PPD employee and president of the board. "We wanted the care to be affordable for parents, and at the same time, we wanted the vendor to hire and retain dedicated, top-quality care providers."

The Care Providers

As a result, the Children's World employees of the Sunny Days facility earn higher salaries than were offered by any of the other competing vendors. Most of the child care providers are college graduates, and some have master's degrees, according to Lesley Fallon, the Children's World "mentor" for the Riverdale facility. Jana Balke, the center director, has a bachelor of science degree in elementary education and has been employed by Children's World since 1991.

"All of our employees have a background in early childhood development," Fallon said. "The Riverdale staff is very professional.

Three of our employees other than the director are qualified to be a director of a facility."

Costs and Tuition Assistance

The cost of child care at the Sunny Days facility is \$157 per week for infants and toddlers up to age 2, \$124 per week for 2-year-olds, and \$113 per week for 3- to 5-year-olds. The ratio of children to adults is three to one for infants up to age 2, six to one for 2-year-olds, and 10 to 1 for 3- to 5-year-olds.

Leslie Rubin, BBEP, has had her 3-year-old daughter, Julia, enrolled in the facility since the day it opened. Previously, Julia had been cared for in a home daycare environment. "I moved her for the comfort of having her here. The people are very good," she said. "Also, it's more convenient; it's more structured; and frankly, it's cheaper."

Now that the facility is up and running, the board of directors performs basically two roles: overseeing operation of the center and conducting fundraising to help

employees who otherwise would not be able to afford this type of child care.

The board currently meets about twice a month and reviews reports submitted by the center. Balke sits on the board as a nonvoting member. A board committee also reviews applications for tuition assistance.

"We're currently assisting 10 families," Marquis said.

The board has raised money in a variety of ways including having

bake sales, selling pizzas and flowers, establishing a recycling program throughout the Riverdale facility, and negotiating a contribution from Children's World. Upcoming events include a silent auction to be held October 25 and a cookout to be held in the near future.

The Sunny Days facility is protected by a security system. However, the center maintains an "open-door" policy, and parents are welcome to come check on their child at any time throughout the

day. The hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Marquis and her husband Michael, an employee of MSD, have enrolled their daughter Hannah at the facility. "Michael has lunch with her sometimes," Marquis said. "The other day, she told me they had bugs on a branch for a snack. I found out later that meant raisins and peanut butter on pretzels. Her class is learning about insects right now." ♦

Child Care at Other Sites

Some field locations are also gaining access to onsite child care. JFKids Port, a state-of-the-art child care facility on the grounds of JFK International Airport in Jamaica, NY, opened its doors July 24. This facility, which sits on a 1.5-acre site, has 14,000 square feet of outdoor

play space. Managed by Bright Horizons Children's Centers, Inc., the facility serves employees stationed at the airport and can accommodate children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years. For more information, call the center at (718) 553-5437.

Construction is under way for a facility in Ames, IA, that will serve

employees of APHIS and the Agricultural Research Service. Steps are being taken to secure a vendor, and the facility should open some time next year. Current projections are that the center will be able to accommodate up to 80 children. Call Jan Pedersen at (515) 239-8551 for more information.

Your OPF Is One of 17,000 Handled by a Minneapolis Office

By Dru Dukart, Human Resources Operations, M&B

Human Resources Operations (HRO) receives many requests from employees wishing to view their official personnel folders (OPF's) or to receive copies of documents from their OPF's. The primary responsibility of HRO's Files section is to keep OPF's as complete and current as possible, and the day-to-day filing of personnel actions and other forms into the 17,000 OPF's maintained by HRO is voluminous. However, HRO will grant requests to view or copy information from OPF's as time permits.

What's in It?

In order to expedite these requests, HRO would like to share guidelines from 5 U.S. Code 522a, Public Law 93-579, and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's "Guide to Personnel Record-keeping." First, requests for copies

of documents from your OPF, or to view your OPF, should be sent to the attention of "HRO Files" and include your full name, social security number, and your handwritten signature. Second, OPF's cannot be mailed directly to an employee; they can only be sent to the immediate supervisor and must be viewed in the presence of the supervisor or a designated official. Third, nothing may be added or removed from an OPF while it is out of HRO's custody. If you find inconsistencies in the information in your OPF, please contact HRO for instructions on how to have them corrected.

What's Not in It?

You may forward documents you believe should be in your OPF to HRO; however, the guidelines mentioned above specify types of documents that do not get filed in OPF's. These include, but are not limited to:

- Letters or memoranda that express admiration, approval or

gratitude for work done in the normal performance of duty;

- Letters of reference or recommendation; and
- Training certificates (if the training has already been documented with training form SF-182).

HRO frequently receives these types of documents with requests to include them in OPF's. Usually, HRO will return the documents to the employee, giving the reason why the requests cannot be honored. Documents like those mentioned above are normally kept in an employee's work folder maintained by the supervisor. If you have questions about your OPF, call HRO at (612) 370-2230. ♦

Hoboken, Living Museum of Plant Health, May Be Closing

By Larry Mark, Office of the Director, LPA

An APHIS institution is slated to close this September.

If all goes according to schedule, the Hoboken Plant Quarantine Inspection Station, in operation since 1919 and in the same building at 209 River Street since 1940, will be moving operations 12 miles south, where the business is.

Dick Ransom, New Jersey State plant health director, explains the reason for the move. "All our work is now centered in Elizabeth and Newark," he says. "When the Hoboken building was especially built for PPQ, it was right in the center of plant maritime activity and ag commodity trade. But as industry changed from pallet and bulk shipments to containers, Hoboken stopped being at the hub, as it once was."

According to Ransom, PPQ is looking to lease 11,700 square feet of space in central Elizabeth "right next to Sealand, one of the largest shipping companies in this country." Details are still being worked out.

In late June, when Laurie Smith, LPA photographer, and I visited Hoboken to review the historical photo collection and artifacts at the facility and get a story on a large orchid shipment (see page 14), we found a unique Art-Deco-style building faced with buff brick and maroon-and-red trim. A third-floor office building I visited still has a rack of 24- by 36-inch floor plans—all dated January 1939!

Hoboken's Origins

Down the hall in another office, I found a two-page document from February 1962 that provides some background on Hoboken's origins. Starting in 1915, propagative material brought in for the Department's use was processed through the main inspection station for the East Coast, which was located at 12th and Constitution Avenue, NW (previously called "B Street") in Washington, DC. Evidently, USDA at that time was in the business of distributing new or different plants and wanted to make sure they were healthy.

But in 1919, when quarantines for commercial shipments were first authorized under Quarantine 37, shippers began clamoring for



One of many historical photos at the Hoboken office, this one shows the Inspection Station as it was in the 1940's.

USDA PHOTO

an inspection facility in the New York area. Finally, the background paper notes, "an ideal location was found in the site of the old Captain Mueller house of the old North German-Lloyd Steamship Company" that had been taken over by the U.S. Government during World War I. In 1938, the Maritime Commission allocated the site to USDA, and the Works Progress Administration—the WPA—was granted \$40,000 to demolish the old building and \$400,000 to construct a new one.

The new building was occupied on June 28, 1940, and opened for business 3 days later on July 1. A log of visitors begun a year later shows a steady stream of clients.

Pack Rats Extraordinaire

I tend to be a bit of a pack rat, but at Hoboken, I don't think anyone threw anything away!

I found a 1939 notebook containing the "notice to bidders" for the new building. The document had excruciating details, including such specifications as the wage rates for various types of workers. These ranged from asbestos workers at \$1.65 per hour (helpers received only \$1.12) to operators of power

hoists (two or more drums) who got \$2.25 (one-drum operators were paid \$2.00). On the low end of the scale were unskilled laborers (65 cents) and plumbers' helpers (\$1.00).

Present Staff

When Smith and I were there, only a scant half-dozen PPQ employees were rattling around in the four-story building. There were Oswald Andrade and Marty Feinstein, PPQ identifiers of insects and plant diseases, plus their secretary, Elayne Nevins. Down the hall were Pete Witherell, staff officer, PPQ Methods Development, and secretary Marie Bera, both since moved to the new PPQ plant center at Oxford, NC, and to retirement, respectively.

Even though the move has been planned for some time, some still aren't so sure it will happen.

"We're still here," says Feinstein.

A 1982 document on the historical significance of the building describes it this way: "The hall walls are covered in a beige, glazed terra cotta, and floors are of beige quarry tiles, designed to facilitate maintenance. Its design in the Art Deco style distinguishes it in Hoboken. . . ." That particular

document dates from one of the other times when a Hoboken move was being contemplated.

View of the Big Apple

On the roof is a somewhat dilapidated greenhouse. But it affords a view of the New York City skyline that is spectacular. "On the Fourth of July, employees bring their families up here to view the fireworks," Andrade says. "It's a wonderful panorama and a splendid place to watch from."

While looking through the file cabinets, I picked up a document titled "The Hoboken Plant Quarantine Inspection House." Written by George Becker, long-time officer-in-charge, it was the basis for a presentation on Hoboken at the meeting of the American Association of Economic Entomologists in the New Yorker Hotel in December 1942.

Becker noted that the "greater part (about 3,200 sq. ft.) of the first floor of the building is used as a shipping and receiving room. The space is divided by a woven wire fence; incoming material being kept on one side; and material that has cleared quarantine on the other. On this floor is a vacuum fumigation tank of 1,000 cu. ft. capacity, which is used for exceptional shipments."

Unique Fumigation Tanks

Andrade and Feinstein pointed out that old fumigation chamber to

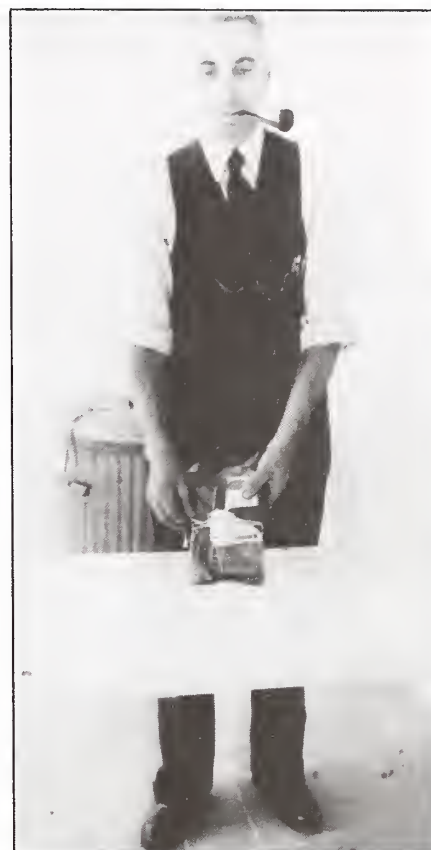
us. "It's capable of a vacuum of 28 inches, and it's one of the biggest around," Feinstein says. The building also contains hot-water treatment tanks, the same ones described in detail in Becker's paper. "The fumigation tanks are steam jacketed," Andrade says. "There are no tanks like this anywhere else in the country."

Becker's paper described the inside of the building this way: "The walls and floors of all rooms where plant material is handled are constructed of tile, and all tables, bins, cabinets, etc. used in the inspection work are on rollers to facilitate cleaning and sterilizing of the rooms."

"All the furniture is original," Andrade says. "From 55 years ago."

There's a wealth of scientific information in the building. Bookshelves house the entire collection of *Mycologia*—a journal on fungi—from 1910 to the present. Nearby are volumes of Saccardo—late 19th and early 20th century descriptions in Latin of genera and species of fungi by the foremost author in this field.

On another bookshelf are the lists of intercepted plant pests from 1930 to 1987, information now kept on computer. A file cabinet has a set of cards showing salary information for employees back to 1940 when the building opened for business. "It's almost like a complete history of the salary



USDA PHOTO BY RANDALL LOTTA

Chief Inspector M.E. Rostal holds the first package sent through the Hoboken, NJ, Inspection Station on July 1, 1940.

structure of PPQ," Andrade says.

There's a lot of nostalgia in the building. As Dick Ransom put it: "It has served PPQ well."

And, as this story is being written, there's a new twist: The city of Hoboken, which had twice proposed redevelopment in the area where the inspection station is situated only to have funding voted down by the citizens, is again proposing to take back the property. It seems they've found investors. But this time there's an additional hooker. The permit from the old Maritime Commission (now the Maritime Administration) contains a provision that could force PPQ to return the property in its original condition; i.e., sans building.

If we move out, APHIS may have to pay to have the building torn down! Hoboken closing? Stay tuned. ♦



USDA PHOTO BY BECKER

Federal employees inspect plants at the Hoboken Inspection Station in November 1940.

Nicaraguan Children Help Spread Word About Screwworms

In this Central American country, which is still recovering from its civil war, small agricultural programs tend to go unnoticed. Nevertheless, one program in which IS employees are cooperating with the in-country agricultural community is worthy of attention. That program is the cooperative U.S.-Nicaragua Screwworm program. The program, started in 1992 to eradicate a debilitating and economically costly disease of cattle, is about half complete in its goal of eradicating screwworms from the country.

As many long-time agency employees know, screwworms attack cattle or any warm-blooded animal, including humans, in the larval stage. Eggs deposited by the screwworm female fly in open wounds of a warm-blooded host hatch and burrow into the flesh, feeding on tissue. If the wound is left uncured, subsequent reinfestations can kill an animal, and populations of flies build quickly in the tropical climate of Central America.

Using a sterile male-release technique, a biological control, USDA first eradicated screwworms from the southern United States. Then, in a 20-year cooperative program with Mexico, screwworm was eradicated from that country, as well as from Guatemala and Belize. In the last 5 years, IS employees have negotiated cooperative agreements with the remaining Central American countries. Working with each country's veterinary and industry officials, IS has succeeded in pushing screwworms farther and farther away from the United States. Already El Salvador is free of screwworms, and no cases have been reported from Honduras

since January of this year. IS employees Alan Terrell (veterinary medical officer), Pedro Matos (animal health technician), and Walter Rice (adminis-

trative officer) hope to add Nicaragua to the list of screwworm-free countries by the end of 1996. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY WALTER RICE

Inspectors and information specialists prepare for a presentation about the program to rural farmers and ranchers. A pack horse carries the generator and movie projector needed to show the screwworm film.



APHIS PHOTO BY WALTER RICE

In Nicaragua, outreach to school children—"amiguitos"—is a good way to get the message about the program's activities to their parents. Here, Mosquito Indian children stand in front of a screwworm sign printed in their language.

Lincoln University Student Enjoys Internship With ADC

By Robin Porter, Public Affairs, LPA

It's August 1995, and Melasun Hughes is exploring her future in natural resources. Hughes, a graduate student at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO, is contemplating a career in wildlife biology or public affairs or agriculture or. . .

"I want to stay in the agriculture field where I can use my education to work with people and solve problems," says Hughes, who is on a 30-day detail with ADC in Riverdale, MD. "I am happy that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided me with the opportunity to explore career options in natural resources."

Lincoln's Center of Excellence

ADC is one of the founders of a new Center of Excellence in wildlife management at Lincoln University. Students, like Hughes, who enroll in the program have a unique opportunity for formal academic training and hands-on summer experiences in wildlife management.

In 1994, more than 10 students participated in a variety of ADC-sponsored activities, including research involving the development of deer repellents, studies of coyote behavior and bear damage to forests, and evaluation of the impact floods have on wetland habitat along the Missouri River. More than 20 students are currently enrolled in the Center of Excellence. The ultimate goal of the program is to develop a culturally diverse and enriched pool of highly qualified candidates for professional wildlife positions.

Public Affairs Training

Hughes, 25, is concentrating on public affairs outreach in natural resources during her internship with ADC and LPA. She holds an undergraduate degree in agriculture.

"My main goal for being in Riverdale is to prepare for the September dedication of the Center of Excellence at Lincoln," says the Georgia native. "My role will be to handle all media and outreach activities at the event."

"In addition, I want to learn strategies for communicating information to the public about natural resource and wildlife management," adds Hughes.

Lincoln University was founded in 1866 and is one of the oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States. Today, Lincoln offers comprehensive academic studies to about 4,000 culturally and ethnically diverse students.

Outreach to Minorities

Besides offering internships to Lincoln students, ADC participates in an educational program at the Kingsville, TX, campus of Texas A&M University. The focus of the program is to make minority students aware of career opportunities in wildlife management and to provide information on the ADC program. Additionally, ADC has a cooperative student program with the College of Agriculture at Texas A&M.

Each year, ADC representatives attend Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resource and Related Sciences (MANRRS) conferences to educate minorities about careers in wildlife biology and natural resources. In March, ADC set up an exhibit at the National MANRRS meeting in Lansing and distributed information to attendees about career opportunities in ADC.

"It is vital that we develop successful outreach programs aimed at increasing minorities in the field of wildlife biology and natural resources," says ADC's Deputy Administrator Bobby Acord, who serves on the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Minorities in Natural Resources Committee. "Diversity is the key to the future of our profession." ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Melasin Hughes, graduate student at Lincoln University, works at her LPA office in Riverdale, MD. While on her internship, she completed a speech for Assistant Secretary Pat Jensen to give at the Center of Excellence dedication.

Sharp-eyed Plant Identifiers Foil Violators of CITES

By Larry Mark, Office of the Director, LPA

It takes a sharp eye to detect underhanded import methods. And in the case of the illegal orchid shipment from Thailand, Oswald Andrade, PPQ identifier in Hoboken, NJ, was the man with that sharp eye.

Labeled as artificially propagative materials, the 5,450 plants in 20 large boxes that arrived at the Hoboken plant inspection station last May was one of the largest, if not the largest, shipment of orchids ever to arrive in the United States. When identifiers examine imported propagative plant material, their first concern is that the material be free of insects, plant diseases, and noxious weeds. Secondly, they consider whether or not the material is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and make sure that the shipments comply with any other applicable regulations.

Threatened and endangered species are placed on one of three CITES lists. Species on the first list are almost on the verge of extinction. Permission to move them from their environment is given only to scientific institutions for research and study. Species on the second list are restricted to prevent their depletion in nature, but artificially propagated animals and plants can move in commerce. Species on the third CITES list may not need protection everywhere but are protected by restrictions of individual countries.

The orchids in question were on the second list. If they had been collected in the wild, restrictions on their export would have been much greater than on orchids propagated in greenhouses. Artificially grown orchids of these species can be exported and imported legally by commercial establishments.

This particular shipment of Thai orchids contained seven different species of the genus *Dendrobium*. The orchids had one strike against them right off the bat: two boxes were found to be infested with actionable insects. The importer was contacted and given a choice: fumigate the two boxes of orchids to kill the insects and possibly damage the plants—or re-export them. The owner opted for treatment.

In the meantime, Andrade was calling for help to verify his suspicions about the origins of these orchids, which had been manifested as greenhouse grown. In examining the plants, he found a number of clues that led him to believe that the orchids had been collected in the wild. These clues included insect damage on the leaves and the fact that the tubers were wrinkled, not smooth.

"You also could see that the plants had been growing in different directions," says Andrade. "That's not normal for orchids raised in a greenhouse. And the plants had a gold tinge, where those grown in a greenhouse have a greener color."

On several plants, Andrade observed that their roots had grown around the branch of a tree. "One even had a broken branch attached," says Andrade.

It's not as if identifiers at Hoboken haven't seen orchids before—both legal and illegal. "We have had clean, artificially propagated orchids come through on a number of occasions," Andrade says. Marty Feinstein, the other

PPQ identifier at Hoboken, recalls a time they had orchids come in labelled as Chinese medicinal herbs. "In that case," he comments, "there was no general permit and no CITES documentation—clearly illegal. The material was re-exported and we assessed a civil penalty in the case."

Why the concern? "Because orchids are disappearing from the environment at an alarming rate," Feinstein says.

To verify his belief about the orchids' origin, Andrade first called on John Arcery and Leo Castenada, both PPQ employees, and also consulted orchid experts at two rescue centers. All concurred: the orchids were definitely wild grown. Andrade then forwarded this information to the U.S. importer. He responded by sending replacement documentation indicating that the orchids were collected in the wild.

"We passed this information on to Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) headquarters officials in Arlington, VA., who contacted the CITES Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland," Andrade explains. "They are the ones



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

PPQ Identifiers Marty Feinstein (left) and Oswald Andrade examine part of the shipment of 5,450 orchids that were labeled as artificially grown.

Enterprising Employee Finds Weeper Capuchin a New Home

By Stuart McDonald, Public Affairs, LPA

Ray Flynn, a REAC veterinary medical officer, didn't read a book that said bureaucrats mindlessly enforce the regulations. In fact, his solution to what to do about "Mohawk," a weeper capuchin monkey on display in a pet store in Lakewood, CO, exemplifies the best in creative problemsolving. Everybody came out a winner.

Mohawk's owner became an exhibitor licensed under the Animal Welfare Act because he was displaying his capuchin monkey in a cage in the front of the store. However, some passersby didn't think the monkey was getting good care. In response to public complaints, Flynn and Burke Newman, a REAC investigator, inspected the pet shop. They noted numerous infractions, including failure to comply with housekeeping and cleanliness standards and the unsupervised feeding of junk food to the monkey by the public.

The pet store owner was informed that these noncompliance issues would result in a violation case and that his facility must be brought into compliance. Flynn and Newman suggested a possible solution to his problem: remove the monkey from display or move it to an appropriate facility. Either action would remove the owner from the exhibitor category, and, if REAC's sector supervisor agreed, the case would be dropped.

The owner had no other place to keep the monkey and felt moving him to another facility would be stressful to the animal, who had spent the last 28 years in the



PHOTO COURTESY CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN ZOO

Mohawk with his deliverers: On left, Dale Leeds of the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo; Ray Flynn, REAC VMO, on the right.

presence of humans. When the owner mentioned the possibility of euthanasia, Flynn told him he would try to find a suitable home for Mohawk.

REAC's Animal Care unit has an excellent working relationship with the staff of the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs, CO. In the past, the two organizations often consulted each other on various animal welfare issues, and recently, the Zoo held an elephant management workshop for REAC's Western Sector Animal Care staff.

The Cheyenne Mountain Zoo also has a large primate collection and excels in psychological enrichment techniques for these animals.

So, Flynn called Dale Leeds, the Zoo's general curator. Flynn explained that he had an old, human-socialized, junk-food-eating capuchin who needed a home.

Dale Leeds promised to either find Mohawk a home or make one for him at the zoo. True to this word, on February 2 of this year Mohawk took up residence at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs. The next time you're in the Colorado Springs area, drop in and see Mohawk's new surroundings and his new friends. He'll be glad to see you. ♦

who make the final decision about admissibility of the documents."

The next week, FWS officials forwarded the letter they had received. The Secretariat could not permit the United States to accept the permit that had been issued to replace the original permit, the letter said. Furthermore, "the Secretariat doubts very much that they [the Management Authority of Thailand] would have agreed to the

retrospective issuance of a new export permit. . . ."

The next paragraph in the letter vindicated Andrade's judgement. "In this particular case, the exporter had first declared that the plants were artificially propagated. Only after your experts had declared doubts about their origin, he produced an export permit indicating that the plants were wild-collected. This means that the error is attributable to the exporter."

What will happen to the 5,450

orchids? "Because it's such a large shipment, the plants will be distributed to five rescue centers identified by FWS," Feinstein says. "It's important that the plants go to a center that can care for them," Feinstein points out. "Orchids are very fastidious; they're tough for the amateur to grow."

And also tough to slip a wild-grown orchid past the sharp eye of PPG identifier Andrade! ♦

Bermuda Office Takes Preclearance Program to the Public

IS employees in the Bermuda preclearance program joined local agricultural groups participating in Bermuda's annual Agricultural Show this past spring. "We've proven that we're part of the local scene," says Annette Boyle, agricultural aide. "We wanted to make the public aware of U.S. agricultural interests and raise the level of awareness of travelers leaving Bermuda for the United States."

Boyle, a second agricultural aide, Dana Mello, and IS' Helena Gomez (officer-in-charge) staffed the fair's booth, getting the word out to visitors about the purpose of the preclearance program. Boyle, a U.S. citizen living in Bermuda, has worked part-time as an intermittent employee for IS for 7 years, becoming a key member of the small Bermuda staff. She acted as coordinator for the event.

Handler Lori Kraft and her partner Bamboo of the Beagle Brigade (from JFK International Airport) drew crowds to the IS booth. "Bamboo stole the show," Gomez says. "We don't have a dog team at Bermuda, but for this fair, we were able to get one. While they were here, Kraft and Bamboo worked at the airport, uncovering several food



APHIS PHOTO BY CARL CASTLETON

The agency team rests at the Agricultural Show in Bermuda: (from left) Dana Mello, IS aide; Lori Kraft, PPQ Beagle Brigade trainer; Annette Boyle, IS aide and local Show coordinator.

and flower items in travellers' luggage and participating in

outreach to five local schools on the island." ♦

Focus on Retirees

The following excerpts are edited from Frank Mulhern's notes on the July and August meetings of the group seeking to form an alumni association:

APHIS Alumni—This is the proposed name for retired or former employees. At the August meeting, Norvan Meyer, recovering from a stroke, came with a chauffeur (his wife); Harry Mussman had quadruple bypass heart surgery a week before; and Larry Slagle was wearing a mask because he recently underwent a heart transplant. These alumni not only attended the meeting but participated enthusiastically with other alumni in the discussions!

Alumni Expertise—In July, the group discussed the expertise of former employees and how the

agency might use it. Some former employees, like Harry Mussman, John Kennedy, and H. C. McDaniel, are actively engaged in consulting. Speakers bureaus might need former employees. The agency might want to train qualified retirees so they can be available for special assignments. In August, the group continued this discussion. Some felt that retirees are uniquely qualified because of their specialties. For example, few current employees are familiar with hog cholera. An alumni organization could publicize its members' capabilities and give member lists of qualified specialists to international organizations and other groups who might want their expertise.

Archives—At the 20th anniversary of APHIS, employees began to develop a comprehensive history of

the agency. However, important items were not included. The association could make an active effort to contact current and former employees and request documents, photos, and descriptions of incidents so they could become part of our archives. At the August meeting, LPA's Larry Mark agreed to put together a list of those who worked on the history of APHIS for the 20th anniversary.

Electronic Communication with Alumni—Slagle, Mark, and Meyer led a discussion about going online with alumni who have access to computers. The team feels that it is important to have input on what is happening with alumni at the State level. We tried unsuccessfully to have phone hookups with some of these alumni (See *RETIREES* on page 19)

Spectators Have Their Questions Ready at Aircraft Airshow

By Annie Sutton, Public Affairs, LPA

During the last week of July, several employees went to the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) airshow in Oshkosh, WI, to spread agricultural quarantine inspection messages to as many of the show's 900,000 visitors as glided by the PPQ booth.

The spectators had much to see: World War II Warbirds re-enacting the bombing missions of their era as Glen Miller melodies played in the background; autographed photographs of the pilot who flew the B-17 Memphis Belle; and modern BD-5 jets screaming towards the heavens. Despite these attractions, many airshow visitors also stopped by the Federal tent. Their questions to employees included what to do about gypsy moths infesting their oak trees, why was fruit taken from them when they returned from Mexico, and did the Beagle Brigade also sniff for drugs? In addition to queries that came from Americans, the APHIS team also received questions from many international visitors who had traveled from as far away as Australia to attend the show.

"The show provided us with a wonderful forum to educate a large audience about how they can help us protect America's agriculture," said JoAnn Cruse, PPQ's Wisconsin State Plant Health Director, who helped staff the APHIS booth.

Phyto and handler Tom Miller, PPQ's Beagle Brigade team from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, were there demonstrating how they detect agricultural products in passenger baggage in international airports. In addition to showing Phyto to the public and answering their questions, Miller gave a live interview to a reporter from a Wisconsin radio station.

Miller and Phyto also spent time with four Make-a-Wish Foundation children. The Make-a-Wish Foundation grants wishes to terminally

ill children, and these four children, two of which were flown in from Canada, attended the EAA airshow.

Cooperating with the U.S. Customs Service, Canada Customs, the Wisconsin Air Guard, and the Internal Revenue Service, APHIS employees took their turn hosting the children and their families, showing them around the airshow grounds, and filling their day with air-show activities. Capping off a full day for the children and their families, and a real thrill, was a plane ride in a DC-3 with pilot Chuck Yeager.

The team effort between the different U.S. agencies and the Canadians turned out to be very successful, according to Cruse. Working side by side, employees from these agencies tried combining individual and international efforts into one goal—to improve

compliance through education. This year these agencies focused on youth, featuring drug education and child fingerprinting, as well as other agency-specific displays.

"We were especially pleased with the enthusiastic responses we received from the public to our educational endeavors at this show, and we are already setting our sights on expanding our program for Oshkosh '96," says Cruse. Cruse encourages other agencies and programs to attend next year's event. "How many other opportunities do we have to reach such a large and diverse audience?" Cruse added.

For more information on the airshow, contact Cruse at (608) 264-5112. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY ANNIE SUTTON

Beagle Brigade team Tom Miller and Phyto talk with a child from the Make-a-Wish Foundation. Airshow demonstrations take place behind them.

Jamaica Office Forms and Plays in Federal Olympic Games

By Lisa Nickles, PPQ, Jamaica, NY

The spirits of healthy competition and fun reigned supreme as over 1,000 people, including over 250 athletes, swarmed over the Queens College campus in Flushing, NY, for an event that employees at John F. Kennedy International Airport are calling the "Federal Olympic Games." Ten different agencies participated in more than 20 contests, ranging in scope from bowling to swimming to volleyball. Sporting team colors, each agency came with the intent to carry home medals and bragging rights for the greater glory of their agencies and themselves.

These intrepid competitors demonstrated great human endurance as they braved the force of a New York heatwave in gymnasiums without air conditioning with only fans to cool them during the indoor events. The track and field competitors defied temperatures of over 100 degrees in the shade to take on such exhausting challenges as a 1-mile obstacle course and a 3-mile mini-marathon. High volumes of yelling and clapping accompanied each point scored, each foul called, and each pin toppled, as spectators cheered on their favorites.

Coordinator Ralph Johnson put this impressive event together with almost no outside help. This powerhouse of a human being

contacted the participating agencies, arranged for the location, located, contacted and arranged for the necessary insurance, saw the event through to fruition and then ran in the track and field events. None of the agencies accrued costs or donated money for the event. The costs—over \$5,000—were paid for by entry fees charged to each participant.

Says Johnson, "I think we all need the opportunity to get together and work off the aggression that can build up at work each day. Interacting with the public every day can be stressful, especially considering how many people vent their frustrations on us." Mike Daniel, captain of the FAA volleyball team agreed. "It's a great way to alleviate the stress and strain of the job—take it out on the ball!"

Despite the occasional confusion that normally accompanies any large undertaking, participants and spectators alike expressed desire to see this competition turn into an annual event. Steven Sanchez of INS states, "They should make this into a yearly event. As time goes on, it would get better and better."

PPQ walked away with a respectable share of honors; our three gold medals were won by PPQ officers Jesse Combs in the men's 50 and

100 yard freestyle and Alex Belano in the obstacle course. We also strutted away with four Olympic bronze medals, earned by PPQ officer Alphonso Diaz for the men's 50- and 100-yard freestyle races, PPQ technician Kay Ransom for the women's 50-yard freestyle, and the powerful PPQ volleyball team—PPQ officers Jose Quinones, Marilyn Ruano, Lori Kraft, Todd Edelschein, Bob Miller; and PPQ technicians Peter Bassaw, Jonathan Perez, and Dawn Moran. ♦

Ten Participating Agencies

- American Youth Services
- Board of Education
- Division of Youth Services, NYC
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Human Resources Administration
- Immigration and Naturalization Service
- Social Security Administration
- U.S. Customs Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (PPQ)
- U.S. Postal Service

Congratulations!

... to Ames, IA, winners of the Women's History Award! The Federal Women's Program committee of the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL), in observance of National Women's History Month, presented the award to: **Carole Bolin**, Research Leader, Leptospirosis/ Mycobacteriosis Unit of the National Animal Disease Center;

Sandy Halverson, Staffing Assistant in NVSL's Program and Administrative Services; **Sally Hanna**, Microbiologist in NVSL's Small Animal Virology Section of the Veterinary Biologics Laboratory; and **Ada Mae Lewis**, recently retired Senior Biologics Specialist, Veterinary Biologics Field Operations, Biologics, Biotechnology, and Environmental Protection. ♦

Retirements

This list includes the names of employees who retired between April 2, 1995, and August 3, 1995.

Animal Damage Control

Raymond Linton, Lakewood, CO
Huo Ping Pan, Lakewood, CO

Plant Protection and Quarantine

Nathaniel Arehart, Philadelphia, PA
Ruben Garcia, Brownsville, TX
Martin Merta, Westhampton Beach, NY
Barbara Ribeiro, Dulles Airport, VA
E. Roggenstein, Wilmington, NC
Royal Sharp, New Orleans, LA
Michael South, Raleigh, NC
Joseph Zumbrock, Grand Rapids, MI

Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care

Douglas Brown, Lubbock, TX
Kenneth Carter, Cedar Rapids, IA

Charles Deitz, Apopka, FL
Richard Gunderson, Osceola, IA
Worth Hash, Rural Retreat, VA
Lester Housinger, Georgetown, TX
Lonnie Leavell, Beebe, AR
Martin Lemoine, Baton Rouge, LA
Doyle Owens, Lake City, FL
Guinea Minton, Bryant, AR
Bob Wells, Grand Island, NE

Veterinary Services

Jose Alvarez, Miami, FL
Nilsa Arroyo, San Juan, PR
John Boyd, Bartlett, TN
Seymour Brody, Petaluma, CA
James Byers, Ames, IA
Charles Dents, Arecibo, PR
Perry Duce, Marlow, OK
George Duncan, Ames, IA
Roberto Figueroa, Bayamon, PR
Grace Garrett, Gainesville, FL
Cherry Guerrero, Austin, TX
Donald Hardcastle, Ogden, UT
Carol Jackson, Watertown, SD
Helen Koonz, Albany, NY
Charles Mebus, Orient Point, NY
Elizabeth Meyer, Annapolis, MD
Carlos Miranda, Arecibo, PR

Delfin Olmo-Figueroa, Dorado, PR
Richard Owings, Little Rock, AR
Dean Price, Englewood, CO
Edward Slater, Alva, OK
Helen Tyson, Nashville, TN
George Winegar, Washington, DC
Amador Zapata, Brownsville, TX

Deaths

This list includes the names of employees who died between April 2, 1995, and August 3, 1995.

Veterinary Services

Raymond Smith, Laredo, TX
Michael Wagner, Rio Grande City, TX

RETIREES from page 16

at the August meeting. We will try again at the next meeting.

Alumni in Emergency Operations—John Williams, VS, and Mike Stefan, PPQ, briefed the group in August on the feasibility of using alumni in future emergency operations. In the past, the agency has not been able to keep track of retirees. The proposed alumni association could help the agency locate and keep track of these people. Retirees can help by contacting the nearest APHIS State office, giving that office their address and telephone number, and requesting that the State office send a copy of the data to Tim Blackburn, R&D, Unit 24, Riverdale, MD, 20737. Discussion of the uses of alumni centered around training—recent retirees wouldn't need training, but others would need courses to keep up—similar to what the National Guard does. Alumni could be used in pathway analyses, to conduct surveys, and on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

operations. The group wanted to hear more about the use of alumni to assist FEMA.

Retiree Newsletter—Retiree Rosemary Stanko has been submitting names of retirees and former employees who are not getting *Inside APHIS* to M&B's distribution section. That section is changing to a new labeling system and has been experiencing some problems retaining data. In addition, she advises retiring employees or retirees who move to send in an address change to *Inside APHIS* or to M&B's Printing, Distribution, and Mail Section, 4700 River Road, Unit 1, Riverdale, MD, 20737. Retirees will not receive the newsletter at their home address unless they specify that they want to receive it. A form (HRO Form 426A) should be included with each retirement package, but because other agencies serviced by HRO do not use this form, sometimes it is inadvertently omitted from APHIS retirement packages.

Narrowing the Topics—Many at the August meeting felt that we

needed to return to the basic organization rather than spend time on issues that alumni could adopt. For the next meeting (first Wednesday of each month from 1 to 3 p.m.), the group will attempt to resolve mission, structure, and start-up issues. We will try to spend our time at immediate future meetings on one topic. ♦

Planning on Retiring?

The alumni association needs volunteers! Organizer Frank Mulhern is looking for:

- An APHIS historian, to work with librarian Eileen Welch.
- Someone with experience in incorporation, to help the group write bylaws and structure.
- A trained notetaker, to take the notes at group meetings.
- A writer, to gather and write alumni news for the newsletter.

Interested? Call Mulhern at (301) 982-9729.

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